

Socio-Economic Conditions of Gujjar Tribe: With Special Reference to Rajouri District of Jammu and Kashmir

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ABSTRACT

Jammu and Kashmir are known as the crown of our country. Schedule tribe is the third largest community in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. They primarily reside in the hilly and mountainous regions of the state. They are economically and socially poor but culturally sound. The economic poverty among the Gujjar tribe is more than the other population of the state. Their living standard is deficient as compared to the other section of the society. This paper is based on both primary and secondary sources of data. The main objective of this study is to analyze the socio-economic condition of the Gujjar tribe in the Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir.

KEYWORDS: *scheduled tribe, Gujjar, Jammu and Kashmir, socio-economic*

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INTRODUCTION

There is no precise meaning of the term 'tribe' in the constitution, and there is no perfect or complete definition anywhere. To the average person, the word mainly consists of simple folk living in hills and forests with their 'exotic' customs and practices; to those who are a little 'better' informed, it represents a lot of 'colourful' people with their dance, songs, and folk medicine. It attracts the attention of 'colourful' people with their dance, songs, and folk medicine to an administrator. To an anthropological, it denotes a specific arena for the study of social phenomena. It refers to a group of citizens who are under the individual responsibility of India's president. All of these impressions are right in their own way.

A tribe is a group of people in a primitive or barbaric stage of civilization who follow the authority of a chief and see them as having a common ancestor." The word 'tribe,' according to Verrier Elwin, is derived from a Latin root. The term "Tribuz" comes from English Words and refers to the three divisions into which the early Romans were divided and from which the current English tribe originated. (Singh, 1959)

Gujjar tribe

The Gujjar community, mostly perceived as pastoral and nomadic, is now turned into permanent settlers spreading across Northern India. The etymological meaning of the word "Gujjar" derives from the term "Gaucharana," meaning to graze cows. Even their present occupation broadly connects with cattle-herding. It is convincing that the

occupation of a community becomes its identity. In the post-independence period, the occupational identity of Gujjar became a substantial reason for them to get Scheduled Tribe status.

The word Gujjar is derived from the Sanskrit words Gur and Ujar, which denote enemy and destroyer, respectively, according to literary, historical, archaeological, and numismatic sources. The phrase means "enemy destroyer." According to some experts, Gujjar is derived from the Persian word Gauzar, which means "bodybuilder." Second, Gujarat appears in Indian literary writings earliest known to the fifth century. Third, powerful Gujjar rulers governed Kathiawar and Gujarat. Gujjar and Bakarwal's early past is hidden in plain sight. There are several theories on how they came to be. According to one school of thought, they were inhabitants of Georgia (Ggurjia), a territory situated between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, before crossing the Khyber Pass into India. They left Georgia (Ggurjia) due to a specific push and pull factor. Central Asia, Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan crossed the Khyber Pass to enter the Indian subcontinent. They arrived in Gujarat after marching through Baluchistan in the subcontinent. They travelled out of Gujarat, traversing Rajasthan and Punjab, and into the green pastures of the Siwaliks and the Himalayas, most likely in the 5th and 6th centuries A.D., when severe droughts struck. Gujru (Central Asia) Juzrs (Gurjara), Gujrabad, Gujru, Gujristan, Gujrabas, Gujderkotta, GujarGarh, Gujarkhan,

Gujranwala, Gujru (Central Asia) Juzrs (Gurjara), Gujrabas, Gujderkotta, GujarGarh, Gujarkhan, Gujranwala, Guj

Gujjars in Jammu and Kashmir's

Gujjars, Jammu and Kashmir's third-largest ethnic group after Kashmiris and Ladakhs, represent more than 8.1 percent of the state's population. The Gujar and Bakerwal don't have enough food or fodder for their livestock. They need basic services such as shelter, health, drinking water, and education. According to the Tribal Research and Cultural Foundation (TRCF) report, 71 percent of The Gujar were unaware of the state and federal government's plans for their upliftment as Scheduled Tribes. The Gujjars tribe was designated as a Scheduled Tribe in India's constitution in 1991, and state and central governments initiated programs that help them socially, economically, educationally, and culturally.

The Gujjars tribe is the poorest in the state, living in deplorable conditions and lacking access to education due to their migratory nature. There is a need to develop a long-term inequality strategy for nomadic tribes. They require special attention due to their difficult lifestyle, lack of economic freedom, and food insecurity due to low income and resource scarcity.

Geographical Location

Gujjars tribe is found in all three regions of the state, including Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. From old sources, the concentration of Gujar communities is mainly in the Jammu region, especially the districts like Rajouri, Poonch, Udhampur, Reasi and Kathua and in the districts of Anantnag, Baramulla, Pulwama, Kulgam and Kupwara of Kashmir valley. Gujjars community is the third-largest community in the State of Jammu and Kashmir, constituting about 8.1 percent of the total population.

As per the 2011 census, the total population of scheduled tribes is 232815, constituting 36.2 percent of the district's total population. In the Rajouri district, 23 percent population belongs to Gujjars. Gujjars mostly rear cattle and they are herdsmen of buffaloes and possess small pieces of land, kaccha houses also known as bandi and kothas on the slopes and foothills of mountains in Rajouri district. They have their dhokes on the upper reaches of the Rajouri district, mostly in Thannamndi, Darhal, Budhal, Kalakote, Manjakote areas. There are two types of Gujjars in Jammu and Kashmir, Zamindar Gujjars and Dodhi Gujjars. Zamindar Gujjars are those whose main occupation is farming and animal husbandry. But Dodhi Gujjars are completely pastoral, and they still move from low to high and high to low altitude hills in search of their cattle food on which their whole economy is based. They survive mainly on the sale of milk and its products sometimes; they rear animals on a contract basis. Farming is also taken up by them as a secondary occupation and is done only in winter when they stay in their original habitat. The Zamindar Gujjars have a considerable size of land than the Dodhi Gujjars. The life of

these Gujjars is difficult and busy right from break of day to the end of the day. Every member of the family, irrespective of sex and age, has to contribute considerably to the smooth running of the family.

Review of Literature

Azhar Ud Din, (2015) Economically, Gujjars and Bakerwal are very poor. Gujar and Bakerwals are nomads spread almost all the regions of State Jammu and Kashmir. Economically Gujjars and Bakerwal are very poor. They spend a pathetic life due to the number of problems in their life. To explore Gujar and Bakerwals, tradition, language, art, craft, and a summary about the valley of Kashmir is given.

Kavita Suri, (2014) "Education, Conflict and Development: A case study of mobile schools for Pastoralists in Jammu and Kashmir" has shown that the socio-economic and educational condition of Gujar and Bakerwals is not suitable as compared to other sections of the people. This review helps in this study to better understand educational backwardness among tribal, which is one of the key factors for their scarcity, lack of knowledge, and generally backwardness.

Mohd. Zia-Ul-Haq Rafaqi (2015) discusses the socio, cultural, and demographic in the context of differences in students' academic achievement and background. In this paper, an attempt has been made to study the total enlightening achievement of the Bakarwal tribal Manners' morals among the Bakarwals. The education status of Bakarwal is very bad. This thing becomes them different from the other community of the state.

Objective

1. To determine the socio-economic condition of the Gujar tribe in DodasanBala and Samsamat Panchayat of Thanna Mandi block.

Research Methodology

To locate the socio-economic condition of the Gujar tribe, Rajouri district is selected purposively because there is a concentration of Gujar tribes. As per the census report 2011, the tribal population in the district was recorded at 232815, which constitute 36.2 percent total population of the district. In the Rajouri district, 23 percent population belongs to Gujjars. One block Thannamandi, among them, were purposively selected for this study.

This study is based on both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data was collected through interview schedule and secondary data collected through publishing and unpublished reports, newspapers, articles, journals, books, district census reports, etc.

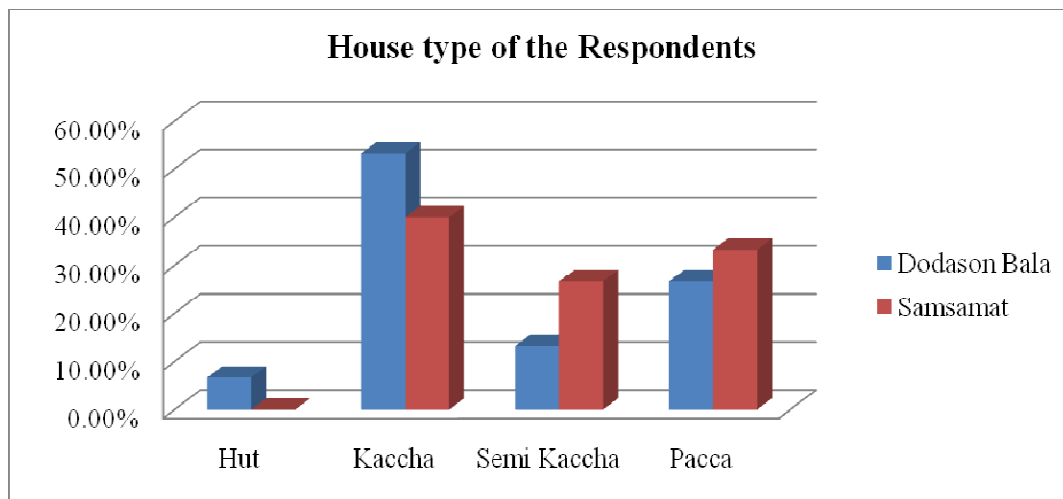
Sampling

A sample of 60 households was randomly chosen from the two Panchayat Dodasonbala and Samsamat. Out of 408 household of Samsamat, 30 were chosen randomly. Similarly, 30 families were selected from 577 households of Dodasonbala for this study.

Table No.1 Distribution of respondents according to their Type of House

Type of house		Hut	Kaccha	Kaccha-Pacca	Pacca	Total
DodasanBala	Respondents	2	16	4	8	30
	Percentage	6.7%	53.3%	13.3%	26.7%	100.0%
Samsamat	Respondents	0	12	8	10	30
	Percentage	0%	40%	26.7%	33.3%	100.0%
Total respondents		2	28	12	18	60
Total Percentage		3.3%	46.7%	20%	30%	100.0%

Source: Primary Field Survey, 2020.

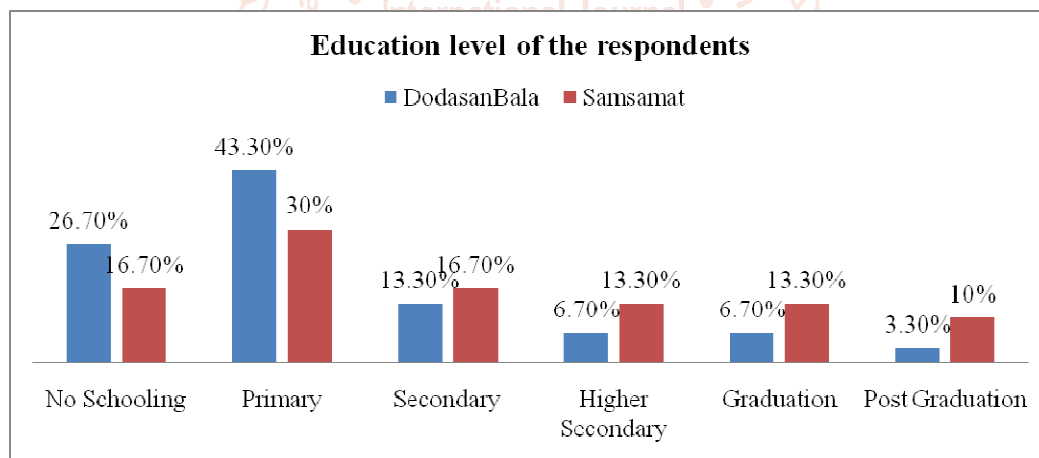


Analysis of table shows that the type of house among the Gujar communities of both Panchayat. The majority of the respondents, 46.7%, have Kaccha house and the rest of the 30% have the house of Pacca. At the same time, 3.3% of respondents are still living in a hut type of house and the rest of the respondents residing in Kaccha- pacca House. It is noticeable that with the period, their trend of the traditional structure of the Kaccha house is drifting toward the modern design of the pacca house.

Table No 2. Distribution of respondents according to their Educational Qualification

Education Qualification		No Schooling	Primary	Secondary	Higher Secondary	Graduation	Post Graduation	Total
Dodasan Bala	Respondents	8	13	4	2	2	1	30
	Percentage	26.7%	43.3%	13.3%	6.7%	6.7%	3.3%	100.0%
Samsamat	Respondents	5	9	5	4	4	3	30
	Percentage	16.7%	30%	16.7%	13.3%	13.3%	10%	100.0%
Total respondents		13	22	9	6	6	4	60
Total Percentage		21.7%	36.7%	15%	10%	10%	6.7%	100.0%

Source: Primary Field Survey, 2020.



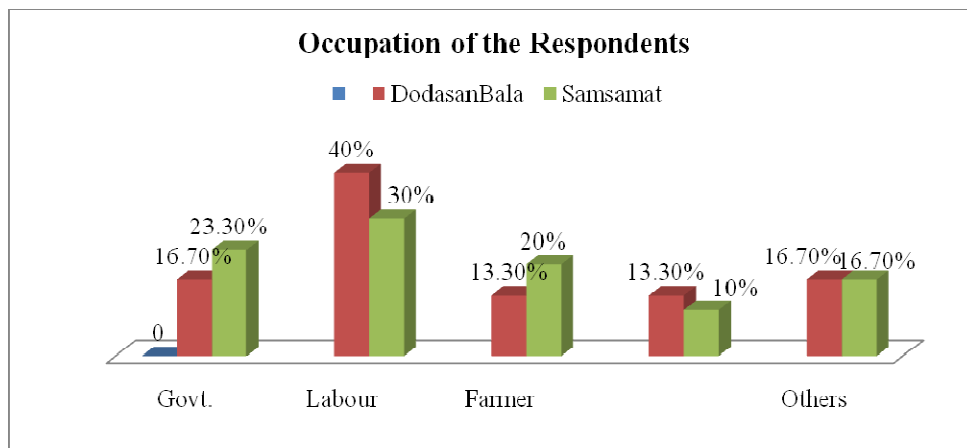
The data from the above level of respondents reveal that majority, 36.7% of respondents, are educated up to the primary level. Of the major group of the respondents, 21.7% are illiterate and 15% of respondents have studied up to high school level, whereas 20% of them studied upon senior secondary and graduation levels—only 6.7% of respondents studied beyond the graduation level.

It shows that the literacy rate of both the village is not good. Due to the lack of proper facilities of educational institutions and some of the respondents have shared that we cannot send our children to school due to the financial crisis, there is no scope for education expenses.

Table No 3. Distribution of respondents according to their Occupation of Respondents

Occupation		Govt. Employed	Labour	Farmer	Traditional Occupation	Others	Total
DodasanBala	Respondents	5	12	4	4	5	30
	Percentage	16.7%	40%	13.3%	13.3%	16.7%	100.0%
Samsamat	Respondents	7	9	6	3	5	30
	Percentage	23.3%	30%	20%	10%	16.7%	100.0%
Total		12	21	10	7	10	60
Percentage		20%	35%	16.7%	11.6%	16.7%	100.0%

Source: Primary Field Survey, 2020



As Per the data from the above table occupation-wise distribution of respondents, the majority of respondents, 35%, are engaged in labor work. 20% of the respondents are in the Govt. Jobs. Only 16.7% of the respondents engaged in agricultural activities. At the same time, 11.6% of respondents are still sticking to their traditional occupation of Animal husbandry and selling milk. The rest of the respondents have opted for other professions like private jobs, business, etc.

Analysis of this table reveals that the occupation of the Gujar tribe has transformed from a traditional mode of living to other ways of living such as government employment, agriculture, and private jobs. This had happened due to the permanent settlement and came to connect with the other communities. The Majority of the Gujar are indulged in labour work, but transformation can be seen and their younger generation slightly moves towards the moderns mode of living.

Table No 4. Distrubution of respondents based on their Annual Income.

Annual Income		Below 30,000	30,001- 60,000	60,001- 90,000	90,001- 120,000	Above 120,00,0	Total
Dodason Bala	Respondents	6	6	9	5	4	30
	Percentage	20%	20%	30%	16.7%	13.3%	100.0%
Samsamat	Respondents	6	4	12	3	5	30
	Percentage	20%	13.3%	40%	20%10%	16.7%	100.0%
Total		12	10	21	8	9	60
Percentage		20%	16.7%	35%	13.3%	15%	100.0%

Source: Primary Field Survey, 2017

The data from the above table shows that the income of respondents reveals that the majority, 35% of respondents, have their household income between Rs 60,000 and 90,000. The next major group of the respondents, 20%, has a household income of less than 30,000. There are 16.7% of respondents have their annual household income between 30,000- 60,000. In comparison, 15% of them have a yearly household income of 90,000-12, 000, 0. There are 13.3% of respondents who have an annual household income above Rs 12, 000,0.

Here one thing is necessary to mention that the income status of the Gujar tribe is not good. It shows that they live in the traditional mode of living and very few among them settle in Govt. job and in other good professions. Moreover, economically they are very sound, but improvement can be noticed compared to the past few years.

Table No 5. Distribution of respondents according to their type of Ration Card

Type of ration Card		BPL	APL	AAY	Total
Dodason Bala	Respondents	21	7	2	30
	Percentage	70%	23.3%	6.7%	100.0%
Samsamat	Respondents	18	10	2	30
	Percentage	60%	33.3%	6.7%	100.0%
Total		39	17	4	60
Percentage		65%	28.3%	6.7%	100.0%

Source: Primary Field Survey, 2020

The above table shows that type of ration card. The majority of the respondents, 65%, have below the poverty line (BPL) of ration card, and the rest of the respondents fall under the category of above poverty line (APL) type of ration card. At the same time, 6.7% of the respondents fall under the category of Anthodia Anna Yojana (AAY). These people are the poorest, which are under the condition below the poverty line. In this way, we can say that some people are impoverished in this tribe.

Result and Discussion

Gujjar Tribe is the third largest ethnic group in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. But primarily found in two districts of Jammu and Kashmir (Rajouri and Poonch). In Rajouri, a large population is settled in some tehsil, like Thana mandi, Kalakote, Nowshera, Sundharbani. I have studied the socio-economic condition of the Gujar tribe. During the fieldwork,

I found that the socio-economic condition of Gujar is deplorable in both the Panchayat of block Thanna Mandi.

The education status of the Gujar tribe is very poor. In both Panchayat, there is no higher education institution. In DodasanBala Panchayat have only primary, middle secondary and senior secondary school. In Samsamat panchayat, only primary school is there. There is no higher

education institution available in these panchayats, such as Technical institute, college and universities. In this way, we can say that education is the main problem. There are no proper facilities for road and transports. Mostly belong to the low-income family they cannot effort to send their children to acquire education.

Another cause that affects education is that the people follow a nomadic lifestyle. The people of this tribe are nomads. They move here and there in search of pastures and livelihood. They are basically migrants. They move to the upper region of Pir Panjal during summer and come back during winter. During the time of migration, they take their children with them. When they go to the upper region of Pir Panjal, their children cannot attend school for five-six months regularly and when they come back; their attendance is short due to this. Migration has badly affected the education of this tribe.

There is a lack of medical facilities and that creates a huge problem for the residence. Gujjar tribe is mostly poor. They have a meager amount of land of their own. Gujjar lives in their kaccha house because they are very low income and cannot make their own pacca house. Primarily the people of this area are using open defecation. They can move here and there and not make their own bathroom. In these Panchayats, most people of this area are using spring as the drinking source of water. There is no handpump, tube well, Govt supply, etc. There are no transport facilities available in this area, which is the main source of development at the present time only a few people have their own vehicles.

Mostly these people have no vehicle and Govt. transport service

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